



NUTRITION INFORMATION : FATS

What is fat and are all fats created equal?

The terms fatty acids and fats are often used interchangeably, but a fatty acid is the basic unit/building block of a fat molecule. There are three main types of fatty acids/fats found in foods: saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated and they function differently in the body.

Foods of animal origin are typically highest in saturated fatty acids. In contrast, foods from plant origin are usually higher in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. All fats contain 9 calories per gram and approximately 115-120 calories per tablespoon.

FAT %	monounsaturated	polyunsaturated	saturated
Olive Oil	73%	13%	14%
Canola Oil	61%	32%	7%
Flaxseed Oil	62%	32%	10%
Palm Oil	40%	10%	50%

What is hydrogenation? What are trans fats?

Hydrogenation is the process of adding hydrogen to oil and this process creates the trans fatty acids in the oil. Trans fat is a specific kind of fat that is formed when oil manufacturers change a liquid oil into a solid or semi-solid fat such as shortening or margarine, and is composed of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.

The primary sources of trans fats are processed foods such as crackers, cookies, chips and deep fried foods such as French fries because they are usually made with margarine or partially hydrogenated shortening. Trans fats are also found in trace amounts in nature in some animal based foods.

How do different types of fat act in the body?

Studies have shown that trans fat and saturated fat increase the low density cholesterol level (LDL-the bad cholesterol) in the blood, which increases the risk of heart disease. Trans fat can also lower HDL's (good) cholesterol levels. In contrast, unsaturated fats, such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats do not increase the LDL's (bad) cholesterol levels.

What is oleic oil?

Oleic oil is a vegetable oil which contains a high level of the monounsaturated fatty acid oleic oil. Studies show that higher levels of monounsaturated fats in the diet support heart health. Oleic oil is listed in the ingredient panel as mid-oleic oil or high oleic oil and the oil is derived from safflower or sunflower oil. The high oleic acid content of this oil makes it more stable, therefore increasing the shelf life of a product that it is in, such as crackers, cookies and potato chips.

What are mono and diglycerides?

Mono and diglycerides are components of fats that act as emulsifiers in foods and they are typically vegetable sourced. An emulsifier is an additive that functions to keep oil and water or other nonfat liquids from separating, but they do not actually contain fat. Mono and diglycerides are often used in baked goods, snacks, sauces and frozen foods.

What does reduced fat mean?

Reduced fat means that a product has at least 25% less fat per serving than a similar food. Reduced fat doesn't necessarily mean low fat.

What is low fat?

Low fat means 3 grams of less of fat per serving.

Are nuts fattening?

Nuts are naturally high in fat. However, the fat is primarily unsaturated fat. Nuts also supply many important vitamins, minerals, and fiber, and are a convenient way to boost protein levels in a meal or a snack.

Are oils healthful?

There are more and more studies out there examining how unsaturated oils (like canola and olive) are healthy to include in the diet. Medical research shows that monounsaturated fats will help keep good cholesterol levels (HDL) high and actually protect against heart disease. Be cautious: highly saturated oils and trans fats do not have the same effects.

Should I follow a low fat diet?

Nutrition experts recommend limiting total fat intake to 30% of daily calories and to focus on keeping the saturated trans fat levels to 10% of total calories. Fats play a vital role in the body and are an essential component of your diet. It is important to eat a variety of nutrient-dense foods within the basic food groups. Build a plate of food which consists of a variety of bright colors and textures. Keep your intake of all foods in balance and enjoy most foods in moderation.

Is it necessary to eat fat?

Yes. It is necessary to eat fat, particularly essential fatty acids (EFA's). EFA's are unsaturated fatty acids and our bodies cannot make them. They can be obtained from both plant and animal based foods, and/or dietary supplements. Essential fatty acids are necessary for heart health, brain function, normal growth, immune function and inflammation control.

The two plant based EFA's are alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) and linolenic acid. Good sources of these EFA's are sunflower seeds, corn, soybean, safflower, canola, flax, and walnuts. Good sources of the essential fatty acids from fish are eicosapentanoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)- they are from sardines, salmon, mackerel, tuna, and dietary supplements such as Trader Darwin's molecularly distilled Omega 3 fatty acids.

Fats play a very important role in the body. They carry the fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K) and help the body to absorb them. They also provide energy and feelings of satiety after a meal.

If I eat fat, will I get fat?

Eating excess fat calories is no more likely to make one gain weight than eating excess protein or carbohydrate calories. Many people have made it a primary goal to reduce their intake of fat, especially saturated fat and trans fats which are associated with high blood cholesterol levels and an increased risk for heart disease.

